THE

SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY

OF THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES,

IN ANSWER

To the publication of the Revd. P. M. M. inserted in the Canadien and the Journal de Quebec from 25th June to 1st July 1843, against the Law of God as the Christian rule of Faith and Practice.

BY H. M.

Ps. CXIX. 57. Thou art my portion, O Lord! I have said that I would keep thy words.

1 Samuel, III. 10, Speak, Lord! for thy servant heareth.

QUEBEC:

1843.

TO THE READER.

Although we are well persuaded that no sound argument can be advanced against our thesis in opposition to the primacy of St. Peter, yet as our Revd. adversary had engaged to refute it, we have deferred the publication of this answer, in the expectation of being able to add thereto our refutation of his production; we have, however, waited in vain. We therefore stand by the thesis, and will be ready to defend it whenever we are furnished with the opportunity.

We further deem it our duty to inform the reader, that we never had the intention of forcing our adversary to become a party to the conference which was held. So far from this being the case, he voluntarily undertook the task in behalf of one of his colleagues to whom it was originally proposed; and it was he (the Revd. Mr. M. M.) who invited us to his house for that purpose.

INTRODUCTION.

We think it necessary to answer the arguments published in the French newspapers of Quebec, from 24th June to 1st July of this year, against the word of God as the Christian rule of faith and morals; we do not however deem it essentially important to follow the author into all the minutiæ of his ill-grounded argumentation, and less so to take notice of the unseemly jesting and raillery with which it abounds; we deem these only to be symptoms of a bad cause, and the means employed to sustain it, but little in accordance with those used by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, from whom we derive this precept: I Peter, 3, 15. "But sanctify the Lord in your hearts, and be ready always to "give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the "hope that is in you, with meekness and with fear."

Our present design is to prove that the word of God is the only rule of faith and morals, and that neither the church of Rome, nor its unwritten traditions, can be a sure basis for the faith of those who desire to do the will of God and to save their souls. To this end we propose answering the principal allegations of our adversary, and the principles which they necessarily involve; the rest we now proceed at once to examine, without, however, expending much time in doing so.

1. Our adversary charges us with unfairness, because in citing the 39th verse of John c. 5, where Christ commands that the scriptures be searched, we left out the words: "for in them ye think ye have eternal life." From this clause he infers that the words which precede are not a command to search the Scriptures, but a reproach to the Jews, who read them to become more confirmed in their prejudices. (J. de Q. No. 66.) That our adversary may know we do not hesitate citing the whole of this passage, we now bring it forward with the words both preceding and following after, that the reader may judge whether or no they are susceptible of the meaning which it is sought to attach to them: John 5, 37, "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have never heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent him ye believe not. Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Had the

Jews read the Scriptures too much, the Saviour would not have addressed such language to them; on the contrary, he would have reproved their indiscretion (to speak after the manner of the Roman priesthood) in reading so assiduously, a book calculated to bewilder and lead them astray. So far, however, from doing this, he rebukes them for not sufficiently searching his word. No, they did not read the Scriptures as they should, but too readily yielded to the interpretation of the Pharisees, who, like the Romish Priests, explained them to their own temporal advantage and profit; and in the same spirit which characterized the former when endeavouring in vain to prevent the people from following after Christ—"This people who knoweth not the law are cursed." But Christ says to them "in them" (the Scriptures) "ye think ye have eternal life;" if so "search them, "for they are they which testify of me."

If the terms upon which eternal life is tendered were not made known in the Scriptures, think you not, reader, that Jesus on this occasion would have dissuaded the Jews from believing such to be the case?

2. The Rev. Father M. M. acknowledges that during the middle ages, before the invention of the art of printing, not one of ten thousand could so much as read; that copies of the Bible were so expensive it was out of the power of all but the rich to procure them; and therefore amid such gross ignorance the Bible could not be the rule of faith to the Church. (Jour. de Q. No. 66.)

The weakness of this argument will easily appear when we consider 1. That if such ignorance prevailed among the laity, it was not much otherwise with the clergy; if not one among ten thousand could read, a large number of the priesthood must have been in the same condition. We read that in the 7th century, the Pope Agathon wrote to the Emperor Constantine that he would send his deputies to the Council of Constantinople, although they were but little conversant with Holy Writ; and that to procure a Theologian he had been obliged to send for one to England. If the Bible could not be the Christian's rule of faith, the prelates could scarcely be expected to furnish one; for Christ saith "If the blind lead the blind they both shall fall into the ditch." 2. If, however, such was the state of things in the Roman Church, we find it to have been different in the Gospel Churches. Their Pastors laboured continually in preparing copies of the Sacred Book, in order to promote the reading of it among their flocks; and they in-

structed the young, making them learn by heart several of the books of the Bible, especially the Gospels.

3. He maintains that in the reign of King Josiah there was left only one copy of the Scriptures. (J. de Q. No. 67.) This is evidently false. How can it be imagined that among so large a number of Priests and Levites, spread through the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, who had remained faithful to God, not one had preserved a copy of the law? It is true the King was much astonished when the book which was found in the Temple was brought to him; but this astonishment did not proceed from his ignorance of the contents of the book, but from the fact that this was the original, that identical copy which had been deposited at the side of the Ark of the Covenant, as a testimony against the house of Israel.

4. He next maintains that the Canon of Ezra was destroyed under the persecution of Antiochus, and to support his argument he quotes 1st Mac. 1, 59. "They rent in pieces the books of the law and burned them with fire." (Jour. de Q. No. 67.) This however is very far from proving that all the copies of the Sacred Books were destroyed; it may be that a large number were, but it is utterly impossible to prove that the whole were consumed. How will it be maintained that Mattathias and those of the people who remained devoted to God and who retired to the Mountain of Modin, did not preserve His law, which they preferred to their worldly property and even to their lives? The word of God was so extensively spread among the Jewish nation, that every family possessed a copy, and it is matter of history that the most zealous among them, knew by heart all it contained as well as they knew their own names.

5. Finally, he says that the Protestant rule of faith (that is to say, God's holy word), leaves the divinity of Christ unsupported by sufficient proof. (J. de Q. No. 67.)

Hear what the Book itself says upon this subject. Isaiah IX, 5. "His name (Christ's), shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Matth. 1, 23. "And they shall call his name "Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is GOD WITH US." Rom. IX, 5. "And of whom as concerning the flesh Christ "came, who is over all, GOD blessed for ever. Amen." I Tim. III, 16. "Great is the mystery of godliness; GOD "was manifest in the FLESH, justified in the spirit, seen of "Angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, "received into glory."

Reader! are these declarations of the Book of God conclusively favourable to the argument advanced by the Priest?

We now beg of you, reader, to believe that what follows proceeds from an ardent desire that God may be glorified and souls saved. We have no other interest in the matter than your salvation, and this must be apparent from the consideration that in the defence of this cause, we only reap trouble, hatred, and personal inconvenience. We would by far prefer living in harmony with our fellow citizens, in the profession of the same religion, if it could be done without offending God. We pray the Father of all mercies, whose compassions exceed our sinfulness, that he would forgive those who hate us; soften their hearts by true repentance, and enlighten their minds by his own divine illumination, that they may discern the day of their visitation and the way of salvation by grace; lest ultimately he should withdraw his mercies from a people who turn their backs upon him, and lest he should permit a darkness more palpable than the first to fall upon a nation hostile to the light of the Gospel.

If these considerations should have the effect of influencing any, we shall rejoice and account it an ample reward of our labours. If the reverse be the case, we shall at least have the consciousness of having delivered our own soul, discharged our conscience, and lifted up our voice as a witness in a perverse generation: waiting until the Son of God returns from on high to gather his children to himself, and render to each according to their works. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

PERFECTION OF THE SCRIPTURE.

IT CONTAINS ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO SALVATION.

In 2 Tim III, 15, it is written that the Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation. That the scripture is divinely inspired, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. I beg to observe that the Holy Ghost saith that the Holy Scripture makes men wise unto salvation; that it is not only profitable, but profitable for all things necessary to render the man of God perfect. What more can be required? since it is profitable, 1. For doctrine, or that is, to give a correct apprehension of true doctrine. 2. For reproving errors destructive of the truth. 3. For the correction of vice and to bring back the wicked to a sense of their duty. 4. To instruct or to form men to the practice of real piety and righteousness, in which are embraced holiness of heart, and love to our neighbour. Yet as if the enumeration of these properties of sacred scripture were not sufficient, as if it were not enough to know that it establishes all important truths, combats all error and vice, and inspires the love and practice of all virtue, the Holy Spirt adds that it renders the man of God perfect, so that there is no function appertaining even to the office of a minister of the truth, which the Scripture will not adequately provide for.

To this first argument, I add another, which is found in the prohibition of God, to add to, or take away from the matter of the sacred writings. This express prohibition is found in Deut. IV, 2. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I "command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye "may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which "I command you." And at the fifth chap. 32, "Ye shall ob-"serve to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded "you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left." It certainly appears very evident that a book from which naught can be taken or aught added, and from the precepts of which men are not to turn to the right or to the left, must be perfectly calculated to lead to the object it proposes, the end it contemplates. This argument will increase in force, if we

consider: 1. That here it is question of a written word, as we discover in the 31st chap. v. 24, 25 and 26. "And it "came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the "words of this law in a book, until they were finished: That "Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the "covenant of the LORD, saying: Take this book of the law, and "put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your "God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." 2. That here the precept only refers to the Books of Moses. If at that time God willed that his people should be satisfied with the law which he had given them, because it was perfect; and if it contained all that it was necessary to know in the early ages of the Church, how much more readily should we not admit to be perfect that more extensive code of Scripture where God has been pleased more fully and more clearly to explain by his Prophets and Apostles his intentions towards man? And is it not a criminal audacity either to add thereto or diminish therefrom?

Let it be understood, however, that God does not say he himself will not add to the Books of Moses; he only forbids man's doing so. This is confirmed by a passage from St. Paul to the Gal. I. 8. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, "preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have "preached unto you, let him be accursed." Fully to perceive the force of this passage, it is necessary to consider:

1. That the prophets and apostles have made known all that is necessary to salvation, consistently with this announcement of the Apostle. "For I have not shunned to declare "unto you the whole Council of God."

2. That they committed to writing all things they had proclaimed as necessary to salvation. Ireneus is of this opinion, when he says: "We have only known the things necessary "to our salvation, through those by whom the Gospel has "come to us, a Gospel which they first preached and afterwards "wrote according to the will of God, that it might become the "foundation and pillar of our faith." Iren. b. III. c. I. This will also appear reasonable, inasmuch as it would have been very improper for them to launch their anathemas against those who might preach aught beside what they themselves had taught; how could the nations judge whether or not, that which was preached to them was conformable to what the apostles taught, if they had not committed the substance of it to writing? Again, this will appear to have been the case, from the words of St. Paul before King Agrippa, Acts XXVI,

22. "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto "this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other "things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should "come." And the same thing appears again evident from the express declaration of the Apostles in their teachings: John XX. 31. "But these are written, that ye might believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye "might have life through his name." (*) From which it follows, that if they had not written all things necessary to salvation they could not have brought men to eternal life. And lastly, there is no probability of the Apostles not having written whatever was necessary to salvation, inasmuch as they have even recorded precepts which do not appear to be of paramount importance. Is it likely that St. Paul would take the trouble to settle the question about women praying with the head uncovered, while he omitted articles of faith?

This truth is also confirmed by St. John in his 1st Epistle c. 1. v. 1 to 4. "That which was from the beginning, which we "have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have "looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; "(for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear "witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with "the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have "seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have "fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, "and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we "unto you, that your joy may be full."

(*) Note. It cannot be said that St. John in this passage only speaks of the miracles of Christ; as it is evident that it relates to all *the things* that were written. St. John only anticipates an objection which might have been made that his Gospel was imperfect, as the Lord Jesus Christ had performed many works which were not recorded therein. The Apostle admits that Christ had done many other signs and wonders, but asserts that what was written was sufficient to produce faith in Him, and to bring men to seek his salvation. Now the miracles of Christ alone are not sufficient to compel our faith in him. The Prophets performed many miracles, but we do not thence believe that any one of them was the Messiah. It cannot either be maintained that in this passage he has reference only to what he himself had written; for even admitting that to be the case, it would still be true that his Gospel in connection with the Old Testament, would be sufficient to our salvation, as the Gospel of St. John is a perfect abridgment of the Christian Religion. But St. John being the last of the Apostles that wrote, it is much more than probable, if not altogether certain, that he intended by the "things that had been written" not only his own Gospel but all the other writings of the other Apostles which were then in use in the Church.

If it is true that it is impossible to imagine any thing as necessary to salvation which is not found in the Bible, or which cannot be proved by it, then it follows that in it is contained all that is necessary to salvation. And it is beyond doubt certain that nought can be conceived as necessary to salvation which is not found therein. By it the simple are taught to know the God they are required to serve; it discovers to them their condition, the miserable state they are in naturally, their corruption, their sinfulness and the deserts of sin: It teaches what Christ did to save them from this miserable state, and what they are expected to do: It inspires the love of piety, holiness, righteousness and charity: It leads to repentance: It furnishes the motives for ardent love to God and man: It affords consolation in all manner of sorrows and afflictions: It quiets the alarms and anxieties of the awakened and enlightened conscience: It proclaims what they are to be after death, and furnishes the blissful hope of future glory. What more could be desired?

SACRED SCRIPTURE IS NOT A DEAD LETTER, A DUMB LAW, AS SEVERAL OF THE PRELATES OF THE ROMISH CHURCH MAINTAIN; BUT ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS THE POSITIVE RULE OF BOTH FAITH AND MORALS.

What! you call the *divinely inspired* volume a dumb rule, a dead letter? Is it, forsooth, because it emits no sound? would you dare apply this language to the published proclamation of the Sovereign, because it had no voice? Although the word of God gives no sound in its written state, did it not resound from the mouth of the Son of God and his Apostles? or from the Eternal himself amid the lightnings and thunders of Sinai? and ought it not to be equally authoritative at present?

What! the command which God gave, to have no other Gods before him, and to worship no image, will it be esteemed a dumb law, a dead letter, now that it is committed to writing? Here indeed the case is the reverse of idols, of which the Psalmist speaks, (Ps. 115), "that they have a mouth but speak not." Of the sacred Scriptures it may be said that they have no mouth but speak, and loudly enough, in teaching how God spake, and in instructing us how to speak. Hear Isaiah, "If "they speak not according to this word, it is because there is "no light in them." If the Scripture does not speak, it is enough that it rules; and it is no trifling impiety to deny its authority, to judge it because it has no voice. In so doing, it is not the letter that is impugned, but God, the author of its doctrines.

The Sacred Scripture is the christian's rule of faith, inasmuch as it possesses all the conditions requisite in such a rule.

1. A rule should be known. And as a celebrated Cardinal writes, "there is nothing better known, and nothing more cer- "tain, than Holy Scripture contained in the writings of the "Prophets and Apostles, and he must be the most stupid of "men, who refuses to yield credence thereto." (*) 2. A rule should be perfect in all its parts, and we have proved the Scripture to possess this requisite. 3. The rule of faith should be immutable; such is the Scripture as being the work of Him in whom there is no variableness or the least shadow of turning. 4. This rule is of special authority, inasmuch as it claims so to direct us in matters of faith and morals, that when disregarded we fall into sin. Thus Deut. V., 32, already cited. "Ye "shall not turn aside (from the commandment) to the right "hand or to the left." The Scripture itself claims to be a rule, Gal VI., 16. "And as many as walk according to this RULE, "peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." We are further exhorted by it, not to go beyond what is written, 1 Cor. IV. 6: and at Luke XVI. 29 to 31, it is expressly stated that if men hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead.

The example of Christ and his Apostles attests, that the whole word of God contained in the inspired books, is the perfect and only rule of the faith and morals of the people of God.

Let us pause to observe the use the Apostles make of this word, the manner in which they quote it, and the respect they pay to it; the careful attention they bring to each part, and the strong religious assurance with which they insist sometimes upon the sense of a single word, deducing therefrom the most serious consequences, or the most fundamental truths.

Hear the Apostle Paul citing the Scripture and commenting thereon. Observe with what reverence he attends to the least expression; with what confidence he expects christians will submit to this divine rule, and with what affection he presses home its every requirement.

Among the multitude of examples, we might adduce, for the sake of brevity, we shall confine ourselves to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

See at the 2nd ch. and 8th v. where after having quoted these words: "Thou hast put all things under him," he reasons out the authority of the word *all.*

Again at the 11th v., having referred to the 22nd Ps. see how

(*) Bellarm. de Verbo Dei. lib. 1. c. 2.

conclusively he argues from the word, "*brethren*," the human nature which should enshrine the Son of God.

And at the 12th ch. 27 v., how he reasons from the words, *yet once more, &c.*

Again in the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th vs., of the same chapter, how amply he reasons from the words, *my son, &c.*, taken from the 3rd ch, Provs.: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord."

Also at the 3rd ch. from the 7th to the 19th v. and at the 4th ch. from 1 to 11, mark with what earnestness he makes use of the words, *to-day*, in connexion with another passage from the book of Genesis: "And God rested the seventh day, &c."

Here I must end these quotations. But let me ask, is it possible to avoid the conviction, that to the Apostle Paul, the Scripture was the only rule of faith?

O! ye who may peruse these observations, whether shall ye go? to the school of the Apostles, or that of the doctors of this world? "If any one shall take from the words of this book, I "testify," says St. John, "God shall take away his part out of "the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things "which are written in this book." And according to St. Paul, if even an angel should teach ought besides what he had taught, he would be accursed. Rev. 22 ch. 18 v. Gal. 1 ch. 8th to 10th, 1 Cor. 6 ch. 6 v.

Yet let us set aside the Apostles, while we come to their Lord, to enquire in what estimation he held the sacred Scriptures. This is the great question. How did Jesus Christ cite the Scripture? what did he think of the letter thereof? what was the use he made of it? he who was the inspirer and object of its revelations, the first and last; he, whose spirit, according to St. Peter, actuated the Prophets of the old Testament, (1 Peter 2 ch.) he, who was in the bosom of the Father, in heaven, and at the same time sojourning among men, preaching the Gospel to the poor!

O, thou the wisdom of eternity! the uncreate word! the Judge Eternal! speak thou to their hearts, while we endeavour to repeat the declarations which proceeded from thy lips; exhibit to them the majesty of the sacred words as recognized by thee, the perfections, the perennial excellencies thou didst behold in every iota, which will cause them to survive the universal wreck, the passing away of the heavens and the earth!

Follow the Saviour in the days of his flesh. Observe the grave and tender respect with which he opens the "volume of the book," quoting every part, exhibiting the force of the briefest verse. See how one word, one single word, is admitted

to have the authority of a holy law. Then the confident submission with which he receives all the Scriptures, never attempting to impugn any of their precepts. Did I say he received them? From his infancy to the grave, and from his resurrection to his final disappearance in the clouds; in the desert, the temple, and the synagogue, does he not bear about with him the sacred word? In his risen accents, just as the heavens are about to shout the acclaim: "Lift up your heads ye heavenly gates, that the king of glory may come in," what language does he use, what book does he quote? The Bible, always the Bible, or Moses, or the Psalms, or the Prophets, to these he refers, these he explains, verse by verse, word by word!

Let us examine the ministry of Christ, from the age of twelve years to his descent into the grave, or rather to his exit in the clouds, and during the course of that incomparable career, that we may know what the Scriptures were to him, who upholds all things by the word of his power.

First at twelve years of age, see him growing up as if of the children of men, both in stature and wisdom; behold him among the doctors, in the temple of Jerusalem, exciting their amazement because of his answers; for said they "he knew the Scriptures without having learned." John VII. 13, 15.

Then observe the beginning of his ministry. He is filled with the Holy Ghost; he is led into the wilderness, to sustain, as Adam of old in Eden, a mysterious combat with the powers of darkness. The tempter comes near; how will the Son of God who has come to destroy the works of the Devil, meet him? He is furnished from the Bible. He is armed with the sword of the spirit, and with it in three different onsets he meets the foe. Thrice he quotes the book of Deuteronomy. (Deut. VIII. 3; VI. 16; VI. 13; X. 20.—Matth. IV, 1 to 11). In each new assault, the Word made flesh, parries the stroke by a sentence from the oracles of God, "*It is written*, man shall not live by bread alone &c." "*It is also written*: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Get thee behind me Satan: *For it is written* thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

What an example for us! His only answer, his only defence, "It is written;" "Get thee behind me Satan, for it is written;" and the awful and mysterious conflict being ended, Angels came and ministered unto him. But observe in addition, that to the Son of God, such was the authority of the sacred word, that the evil one, who understood the high value he placed upon the Bible, imagined no better mode of conquering his will than by

citing a (mutilated) verse of the 91st Psalm; but Christ to confound him, is satisfied again with answering "It is written."

Let us follow him further, while employed in the work he had undertaken, and while going about doing good; exhibiting his creative power in behalf of others, never in his own. He speaks, and it is done, he expels the evil spirit, calms the tempest, raises the dead. But amid the display of his power, what becomes of the Scriptures? They are ever with him; he bears them respectfully, not indeed in his hand, but in his memory, in his heart. Behold his aspect while speaking of them. While unrolling the sacred volume, it is as though he threw open the windows of heaven, to let us hear the voice of Jehovah. With what reverence he presents the word, explains or quotes from it! This indeed was his business, to heal the sick, and preach the word; and later to die, and fulfil that word.

Hark, while he proves to the Sadducees the resurrection of the dead; this he does from Exod. 3 ch. 6 v. "Have ye not read "that which was spoken to you, by God, saying: I am the God "of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" (*). And when proving to his disciples that he must both suffer and rise again, he does so from the testimony of Moses and the Prophets (†).

Observe him next in presence of the Pharisees, when they came to interrogate him, on the subjects of marriage and divorce. It is still by this word that he confounds them. Might he not have promulged his own laws? Is he not the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords? This he declares, but appeals to the Bible; thus from Genesis (‡): "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female; wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." (§).

Then hear him at last from the cross. There pouring out his soul an offering for sin, his bones out of joint, his soul poured out as water, his heart like wax melted in the midst of his bowels, and his tongue cleaving to his jaws (¶); just about to render his Spirit to the Father;—at this solemn moment, he collects all his remaining energies, in one effort, to repeat part of a psalm which the Church had chaunted for a thousand years, and wherein are set forth his sufferings and his prayers, "Eli, Eli, lamma Sabachthani (my God, my God, why hast thou

(*) Matth. XXII. (†) Luke, XXIV, 26. (‡) Genesis I ch. 27. and 2 ch. 24 v. (§) Matth. XIX, 4 a 6. (¶) Ps. XXII, 14 a 15.

forsaken me)?" But he does more: hear. There yet remained a prophetic word unfulfilled; it was necessary he should taste of vinegar, while on the cross, the Holy Spirit had so declared, a thousand years before, (Ps. 69). "After this Jesus knowing "that all things were now accomplished, and that the Scriptures "might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. When Jesus therefore "had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished! and he bowed "his head, and gave up the Ghost (*)."

Yet behold if possible, something still more striking. Christ has risen from the dead, the conqueror of death; he is on his way to the Father, to resume the glory which he had with the Father, before the world was. Attend, then, to the few moments which he gives to earth; what are the words which proceed from those lips, endued again with life? they are taken from the Scripture. Anew he quotes, explains, and preaches that Scripture (†). And now in conclusion, listen to two declarations, with reference to the letter of the word, and as a last example from our Lord. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the "law to fail" (‡). "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one "tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (§)."

What can be imagined, to express with greater force, or precision, the principle for which we contend, the sovereign authority of divinely inspired Scripture, as the only rule and arbiter of our faith and morals?

IS THE CHURCH THE INFALLIBLE EXPONENT OF THE SENSE OR MEANING OF SCRIPTURE?

Our adversaries, to shield themselves against Scripture, have recourse to the Church, which, however, they openly belie; inasmuch, as they pretend having received from the Church the Canonical books, and yet respecting the number of those Books, they plainly contradict the whole ancient Church, both of the Old and New Testaments.

The Church of the Old Testament never received, nor held, as of Divine Inspiration, the books of Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Maccabees, &c.

And the Church of the New Testament; Jesus Christ and his Apostles, never made use of them, or cited them, as authorities.

St. Jerome, in his preface to the books of Solomon, says, with reference to Ecclesiasticus and the book of Wisdom: "That

(*) John XIX, 28 a 30. (†) Luke, XXIV, 27 a 44. (‡) Luke, XVI 17. (§) Matth. V, 18.

"these two books may be classed with those of Judith, Tobit and "the Maccabees, that the Church though it has not admitted "them into the Canon of Holy Scripture, does not forbear using "them in its assemblies, to instruct the faithful, but never to "authorize or establish any article of the faith." Here, be it observed, he speaks of the creed of the Church.

Milton, Bishop of Sardis, in a letter to Onesimus, quoted by Eusebius at the fourth book of his history, chap. 25, gives an inventory of the Canonical books of the Old Testament, in which he does not include Judith, Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, or the Maccabees.

Origene in Euseb, book 5, ch. 24. St. Hilary in his preface to the Psalter. Gregory of Naz. in his *Carmes* on the Sacred Scriptures. Euseb. in the 3rd book of his history, ch. 10. Epiphanius in his book of measures, and many others, have furnished Catalogues of the books of the Old Testament, leaving out Judith, Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, the Wisdom, and the Maccabees, and moreover agree in saying that the Canon of the Old Testament contains only twenty books. Now, then, how can this revd. gentleman have the boldness to say, that he has received the Canon of Scripture from the Church, when that Church rejects the books he receives as Canonical. However, in our day, when the Church is spoken of, the Pope is meant; for the Roman Council, held in the year 1076, ordains that no chapter or book will be held as Canonical, without the authority of the Pope. Perhaps it will be necessary to have the Pope's authority for receiving the five books of Moses, or the four Gospels. Who is not horrified at the impiety of the Roman Decretal, Dist. 19, Canon In Canonicis, the inscription of which is, *that the decretals of the Popes are reckoned among the Canonical books!*

Infected with such impieties, it is contended that nevertheless in our day, the Church of Rome ought to be, and is the sole interpreter of the sense of Scripture; this, however, is not only unjust and absurd, but also impossible. Thus, if the Church is the infallible judge in this matter, is it reasonable that when the duty of the Church is the question at issue, itself shall have full authority to give a final decision? By this means the Church will only do what it thinks proper, and only obey such laws as it may conveniently enjoin for itself: and of course, when the infallibility of the Church is mooted, it will decide in its own cause. Further, inasmuch as all prelates are sinners in common with others, and by consequence guilty and punishable by the Law, how is it possible that they also should be sovereign and

infallible judges of the law which concerns their sins? if they are, then of course they will never be condemned. Is it not then very impious to assert, that sinners are infallible judges of the Law by which they are to be judged? If the Church were the infallible judge of the sense of Scripture, its authority would greatly exceed that of God himself; the interpreter would be obeyed in preference to the Lawgiver: for the people would not be subject to the letter of the law, but to the sense and exposition of it, furnished by the interpreter. This is the means by which the Pope is aggrandized and enriched, for the word of God is always interpreted to his profit, and to such extent as to assert that by the Roman Decretal, the Pope can dispense with the Gospel, by furnishing its interpretation (*).

Yet admitting this absurd impossibility, before we defer to a Church as having authority infallibly to judge and interpret the sense of Scripture, will it not be proper to be assured that that Church is pure in the faith? If to ascertain this, we have recourse to the Scriptures, behold that Church itself subjected to the Scriptures. Or if to avoid this, we appeal to the Church, then of course it will scarcely condemn itself, whatever may be true to the contrary. Now there is no Church how much soever corrupt, but boasts of its purity. Then among the many Churches, such as the Syrian, the Greek and the Roman Churches, which in every case trace their descent from the Apostles, and boast of St. Peter's chair, why will one be allowed to decide more than the other? Must we not under the circumstances come back to the Scripture, which is one, and received of all, and which itself is infallible, and incorruptible, and wherein enough for the purposes of salvation is so clearly revealed, as to need no interpretation; and wherein we may further observe, if there are obscure passages, they may be explained by others sufficiently plain, for who besides the Lawgiver can give interpretations of the Law, which will be of equal authority with the law itself.

Here I will propound two questions to our adversaries. 1. Do they require that each of the faithful shall receive and approve of the Scriptures without knowing, hearing, or understanding them? To receive them in this manner, is without effect. If then they desire their people to know the Holy Scriptures, it must be in order to their reading and pondering them with judgment and discretion.

(*) Causa 25. Quest 1. Can. Sunt quidam Dispensat in Evangelio inepretendo ipsum.

2. How comes it to pass that while they close the Sacred books against the people, they nevertheless expect the people to discern and know a true from a false Church? In order to this discernment, is it not necessary that the christian should be inwardly enlightened by the Holy Spirit? If this is admitted, does it not follow that the same spirit is needed to enable the christian to discern between the word of God and the word of men? If in order to avoid this dilemma, they say, that the Spirit of God is not needed to discern the true Church, then is their Religion a profane creed, supported by custom, opinion, or human reason? Yet, after due consideration, it will be found that the spirit of discernment, which God gives the faithful soul, to assist in distinguishing the word of God from that of man, is the same spirit by which the true Church is known from a false one, and moreover, because the true Church is that which holds and teaches the word of God in its purity. Whoever, then, says that a man may discern the true Church, without the aid of God's word, as manifestly contradicts himself, as if he said that the righteous can be discerned without knowing the rule or standard of righteousness.

EXAMINATION OF THE PASSAGE ADVANCED BY THE REVD. MR. M. M. TO PROVE THAT TO THE ROMISH PRIESTHOOD GOD HAS GIVEN THE POWER INFALLIBLY TO INTERPRET THE SCRIPTURES.

"But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." There was little danger of his quoting the whole passage, for the corruption of it would have been too palpable. The whole passage as contained in Matthew XVIII. 15 to 17, is as follows: "Moreover, if thy brother "shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between "thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy "brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one "or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every "word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, "tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, "let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Our adversary in producing this passage, has corrupted it in three different ways. 1. He intends that by it Jesus Christ should have established the Romish Church to judge of controversies in religion, and matters of faith. Whereas the Saviour does not speak of religious dogmas, or doubts, but of differences between two individuals, one of whom may have offended the other. He speaks of morals and not of doctrines. 2. The Priest wishes us to understand by the word Church, the Church

universal; an impossibility: for, to judge of differences between two persons, the universal Church is not called together, but some particular Church. 3. He understands by the universal Church, the Church of Rome, a supposition gratuitous and improbable. Thus, if two Christian brethren of the Syrian Church have a misunderstanding, must they appeal to Rome to settle it? Why may not the Greek or Syrian Churches be competent to decide the matter, especially as they are more ancient, have St. Peter's chair, and that from them the Church of Rome received the Christian faith? and from which Churches have been derived the words Church, Priest, Bishop, Deacon, Baptism, Eucharist, and Christian; does it not follow that if these terms have come from them, the Religion of which they are partial signs, comes also from thence?

Pope Innocent III, is more consistent, for in the chap *Nouit*, he claims to have a knowledge of the difference between Philip Aug. King of France, and John, King of England, because in the Gospel it is said; Die Ecclesiæ, as if by the Church the Pope alone was meant. This interpretation was approved by Bellarmine in the 2nd book on the authority of the councils, chap. 19. "The Pope says he must communicate to the Church, that is to say, to himself."

To these three corruptions our adversaries add too acts of manifest injustice. 1. That although this passage is one upon which they build the authority of the Church of Rome, yet said Church is the sole judge of said meaning. In a cause where that Church is a party, and where her greatness and authority are concerned, she insists upon her absolute infallibility to judge aright. By this means she runs no hazard, and, of course, is certain of gaining the verdict.

2. The next act of injustice is still worse; for when it becomes necessary to discern the pure Church, in order to enter her pale, the Church of Rome precludes the people from knowing whether her Ministers teach the truth or not, for to examine the doctrines taught by them, is a liberty not allowed to the flock. And to resolve doubts by the perusal of the Greek and Latin Fathers, the number and extent of whose works are almost interminable, is a matter to the people utterly impossible. Therefore, in order to ascertain whether the Church to which they belong is pure in the faith, they have no alternative but believing their Pastors, who are not at all likely to condemn their own cause. Was there ever a more horrible tyranny imposed upon the consciences of men? Is not this very much like accustoming the people to hazard their salvation on the throw of

a die, and according to custom following a blind multitude, who themselves follow without knowing what?

The 2nd passage quoted, is from the 10th ch. of Luke. "He "that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, "despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that "sent me." Our adversaries pretend that these words were spoken exclusively in favour of the Romish priesthood; but what ground have they for such a pretension? When our Lord addressed the twelve Apostles and the seventy disciples, did he then speak to the Priests? Did he speak to the Council of Ephesus, to the 2nd of Nice, to that of Trent, or to Leo X, who offered and sold heaven for money? When our Saviour said in his account of the rich man: "They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them," did he intend the Scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses' chair, or was it not rather the law and other Scriptures given by the instrumentality of Moses and the Prophets? If so, then, it is the word Christ has declared by the mouth of his messengers which first they preached and afterwards wrote, which is to be the basis and foundation of our faith, and this we must hear by them, for though dead, they yet speak in these Holy Scriptures, these lively oracles, left here to conduct us by the aid of the Holy Spirit unto eternal salvation; yea, and whoever rejects them rejects Christ, the inspirer of them, and rejects the Father that sent him; "and" saith St. John, 1 Ep. II, 22, "he is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son."

The third passage produced against our position is Matt. XXIII. 2. "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. "All therefore, whatsoever, they bid you observe, that observe "and do."

By the citation of this passage, Mr. M. M. puts the pastors of the Romish Church in the place of the Pharisees; which of course means that although they say and do not, and though their lives be contrary to their doctrine, nevertheless they must be obeyed in all things, because they have the seats and are in the regular succession.

I answer that so far as this passage condemns the acts of the Pastors of the Romish Church, who may be compared to the Pharisees, I would be loath to deny the application. But if it be interpreted to mean that the Pharisees were to be implicitly obeyed in all they taught, without exception, it is in direct contradiction to the words of our Lord, who reproached them with "transgressing the word of God by their tradition, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matt. XV, 3 to 9. Again at the 16th ch. of the same book, 6th verse, Christ cautions

his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, meaning their doctrine. If this be true, he certainly did not command they should be obeyed in all things. And if we come to the fact, were they not guilty of manifest impiety, did they not teach the diabolical doctrine, that whoever confessed Jesus to be the Christ, would be put out of the Synagogue or excommunicated?

Did Caiaphas the High Priest and his adherents propound a pure doctrine when they declared that Christ was a blasphemer, and adjudged him worthy of death? When Christ saith, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, he means certainly those things conformable to the Law. This view is confirmed by Deut. XVII. 11. "According to the sentence of "the law which they shall teach thee." Jesus Christ could not mean they were to be obeyed, when their teaching was at variance with the Law. In this matter the rule of Acts IV. 19, is absolute. We must obey God rather than men.

Again, a fourth passage is furnished which is found in the 2nd ch. Malachi, and our adversary quotes it as follows: "The "lips of the Priest shall be the depositories of wisdom, and they "(the people) shall require from his mouth the knowledge of "the law, for he is the angel of the Lord of Hosts."

Besides the falsification of the passage itself, he carefully avoids the words which precede and follow, and this in order to deduce therefrom a conclusion totally at variance with the divine law; hear the Prophet: "And now, O ye Priests, this "commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will "not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord "of Hosts: I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse "your blessings; yea I have cursed them already, because ye "do not lay it to heart. Behold I will corrupt your seed, and "spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn "feasts; and one shall take you away with it. And ye shall "know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my "covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts. My "covenant was with him, of life and peace; and I gave them "to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid "before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and "iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in "peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. "For the Priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should "seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord "of Hosts. But ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused "many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant "of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts."

By these words God does not predict that the Priests would never depart from the true doctrine, but prohibits their so doing. Just as in the command: Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, thou shalt not bow before them and worship them, &c. He does not predict that images would not be made, nor worshipped, but forbids their being made or worshipped. To convert prophesies into commandments, is just as absurd as to turn commandments into predictions: according to this mode of reasoning, when Christ said, one of you shall betray me, the disciples were to understand this as a command to betray. In this reversal of the word of God, the greatest absurdity is manifest; from a command to the Priests to keep the knowledge of the law, he deduces a promise that they would always do so, and then uses it as a foundation upon which to build the infallibility of the Popes and Prelates of the Church of Rome.

This explication, as we have already seen, proceeds first, from a false quotation of the words, and secondly from a corruption of the sense. A third fault is the mutilation or violent disruption of the text from the context; for the very next line shows that these very Priests did not keep the knowledge of the Law, but seduced the people and corrupted the covenant of God. "But ye are departed out of the way, ye "have caused many to stumble at the law, ye have corrupted "the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts." Mr. M. M. was not likely to add this part of the text.

It was not sufficient in a passage of three lines to have committed three sins, a falsification of the words, a corruption of the sense, and a mutilation of the text; to fill up the measure, he must add the blasphemous conclusion, which he infers from it; viz: That the word of God is the rule of faith only in the mouth of the Priest. If this were the case, to read the Sacred Scriptures is not to read the word which is conducive to salvation, and the Decalogue engraved by the finger of God upon the tables of stone, is not the law of God, but begins to be such when the Priest says so; and all this of course to prevent men from attending to it so much as to the word of the Priest. At this rate they may well be imagined in effect, thus to address God: By proclaiming thy word we give it the force of law, and so far thou art under obligation to us. This is strictly in accordance with the views of Mr. M. M. for the Scriptures and the instructions they contain, derive their authority from the Priests and Bishops. This being understood, it may fairly be assumed that God in acknowledgment of the service thus

rendered, will readily allow the curtailment of a part of his law, and the addition of something of their own. This we therefore find, for in the Hours of Our Lady, (printed at Paris, by Heureux Blanvilain, St. Victor Street, the three Maures 1611,) the commandments are thus stated. I. I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other Gods before me. II. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. III. Remember the Sabbath day and the Holy-days to keep them holy, &c. &c. They have here dropped the second commandment, and added the holy-days to the fourth. Hence it follows that the word of God being only the Law from the lips of the Priests, whatever proceeds from their lips is also the Law, although not found in the word of God, which word is regarded as a dead letter, a partial rule, &c. What blasphemies!!!

He also quotes a fifth passage from Nehemiah VIII. 8, where it is said Ezra and the Levites interpreted the word to the people. The original Hebrew reads: "They read in the book "of the Law of the Lord, expounding it to the people, and "gave the sense, explaining it by the Scriptures." Here it was not their own interpretation but that of the Scripture itself, which they gave the people, for they explained it by the Scriptures. What force has this passage against our position? None.—On the contrary, we discover from it that the Law of God was the only rule of faith to the people, for after having heard it, they wept because of their transgressions of it, and were unanimous in resolving to observe its injunctions. This particular confirms what we have before said, that the explanations we give of the Scriptures, we do by the Scriptures, making an obscure passage plain, by the light of a clearer passage; and that none are at liberty to furnish interpretations of the law, having equal authority with the Law, but the Lawgiver himself. And we neither do more nor less, than obey the precept conveyed in this text.

OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURE.

Upon this particular our adversary makes us to say what we not only do not believe, but positively deny; viz: "That we "receive the Bible interpreted by every reader for the rule of "our faith." We receive for the rule of our faith, the Bible, and not the Bible with the interpretation of every reader.

It certainly is a proof of the truth of our Religion, if it must be changed or mis-stated in order to combat its declarations. By this means our adversary does not fight against us, but against his own inventions. We have never claimed authority to judge the Scripture; so far from this, we regard it as the judge infallible of our secret thoughts, and as the source whence we derive the knowledge of our duty to God and our neighbour. We however say that God gives to those who love him, such grace as enables them to distinguish between the word of God and the word of man; and this in accordance with John VII. 17. "If any "man do his will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be "of God, or whether I speak of myself." 1st John II. 20. "But "ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all "things." Ps. XXV. 16. "The secret of the Lord is with them "that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant." 1st John VI. 1. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits "whether they are of God." And thus by the spirit of God, we are enabled to discern the things of God.

We do not wish, however, to be understood to say, that special revelation is necessary to discover a book to be canonical: we say first,—That the Holy Spirit does not lie, and consequently he witnesseth that the books of Judith and the Maccabees are not inspired, as they evidently contain palpable falsehoods. Secondly, that the word of God is efficacious in influencing the heart, and that for this end, it is used by the Holy Spirit without the intervention of any particular revelation. He that fears God realizes in reading the Bible the influence of which we speak, and is at no loss to find the difference between its matter and mere human productions. If our adversaries do not experience this influence, they should not mock at what they do not know; but ought rather to acknowledge that a judicial blindness from God is over their eyes—a token of his anger at their injuriously representing his word as obscure, ambiguous, and imperfect, and for adding thereto of man's invention; as also for divesting it of the authority which it claims as the sovereign and perfect rule of faith, to invest with this dignity some poor miserable sinner—or some mere human tradition. Why should the word of God cause its virtue to be felt by those who load it with obloquy, and who prohibit the reading of it to the poor?

St. Augustine in the 3rd ch. of the 11th book of his confessions, acknowledges this internal teaching of the Holy Spirit, testifying to the heart concerning the truth of Scripture, and speaks of it experimentally. Bellarmin in his Sermon, De lumine fidei, says: "this light of faith is a testimony from God, by

"which he speaks secretly to our consciences; THIS IS THE "TRUTH, DOUBT IT NOT." Thus he that only knows the sun, because his mother has pointed it out with her finger, and said that it is the sun, rests his knowledge upon evidence a thousand-fold less satisfactory than that which the sun itself furnishes; so he that only knows the Bible to be the word of God because the Church has said so, founds his knowledge of that fact upon evidence also a thousand-fold less conclusive than if by reading it he had been influenced—pricked to the heart, as all will be, who do not harden their hearts and stiffen their necks against its authority:—indeed, without this word, we could not even know of the existence of a Church in the world.

We grant that the Church places the Bible in our hands; but when God by that word touches our hearts, we do not from that time believe merely because the Church testifies, but because the word itself has operated the conviction; without this virtue the testimony of the Church would be but of probable certainty, —would produce but wavering faith and slight impressions. No one can have positive evidence that the testimony of his Church is true, until he is fully satisfied that such Church is pure and orthodox in the faith. And certainly this cannot be ascertained until after we have examined the sovereign rule of faith—the word of God. In a word, after having by the testimony of the Church been drawn to the perusal of the word, and experienced its influence, we are able to say with the Samaritans of old, to the woman spoken of in the 4th ch. of St. John—"Now "we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him "ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour "of the world."

It was quite gratuitous and unnecessary for our adversary to advance this passage, 2 Peter 1. 20—"That no prophecy of the "Scripture is of any private interpretation." For we equally condemn private interpretations. So far indeed are we from receiving the private interpretation of any particular person, that we do not even receive that of any particular Church, however extended its limit; but especially if such interpretations be given as infallible rules, and equal in authority to the Scripture; as are the interpretations of the Popes and the Romish Church.

It is true that in our ministrations we explain, but we never presume to give such explanations as laws; and besides, we never furnish any explanation but such as the Scripture itself affords; thus it is not our interpretation, but that of God himself.

As this particular is deserving of more attention, I will en-

deavour to show wherein our interpretations of the word of God differ from those of Rome. And here I find the following principal points of difference.

1. The explanations we give of Scripture are drawn from the word itself. But the Church of Rome furnishes its interpretations chiefly from the unwritten word or tradition. Thus St. Paul, in Heb. ch. 9 and 10, says that as it is appointed unto men once to die, so Christ died once for all, and that by the oblation of himself offered once for all, he has for ever sanctified those that believe. But the Church of Rome says that there is another offering of the body of Christ without blood. Now the Scripture is silent respecting this unbloody sacrifice.

2. When we tender any explication of a passage, we invite our hearers to verify our citations, that they may know if the allegations we make are true, and if we proceed with sincerity. And so the Bereans did; after having heard St. Paul they examined the Scriptures to know if the things spoken were in agreement therewith, Acts XVII. 11. But on the contrary, when Rome interprets, the people are not permitted to examine the truth of what is spoken.

3. We never give explanations as rules, and we do not set up for judges of the Sacred Scriptures. But Rome is not only infallible in its interpretations, but ascribes to them the same authority as to the Scripture itself. An arrogant absurdity—the sinner is judge of the very Law which pronounces upon his sins!

4. We cannot be accused of twisting Scripture for gain, or to give it a sense which would tend to bring us wealth, or worldly distinctions. But this is the master sin of the Romish Church. Avarice and ambition have prompted an ingenious torturing of the word of God, and produced admirable interpretations of its sense. In the first tome of the councils, there is a decretal attributed to Anaclet, which affirms that Peter is called Cephas, that is, chief and principal of the Apostolate. *Cephas, id est caput et principium Apostolotus.*

In the 9th session of the last council of Lateran, the 72nd Psalm is quoted: "Yea all Kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." As if this was said of the Pope. And again, to the Pope is attributed what Christ says in Matt. XXVIII. 18. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Many other examples of a similar character might be produced, as evidence of a bad cause, which is only sustained by twisted and tortured texts, and violent interpretations, totally at variance with the sense. The Church of Rome

has usurped the office of infallible judge of the sense of Scripture, in order that where her interpretation is manifestly unreasonable, it may be supplied by her authority. The proofs she offers, of which we have produced some samples, could of course be admitted only where her power is feared.

5. And lastly, we cannot be charged as the Church of Rome may justly be, with furnishing profane and ridiculous expositions of Scripture, only calculated to bring it into contempt. The second Nicene council, which our adversaries class among universal councils, establishes, under pain of its anathemas, the adoration of images, asserting that they are of value equal to the Gospel. And to prove this monstrous doctrine, the Fathers of this council adduce certain passages of Scripture, giving them with extraordinary subtilty, a most singular bias. And because the Iconoclasts ridiculed these proofs, Pope Adrian I. wrote a book which he dedicated to Charlemagne, which is found at the end of this council, in which he confirms the interpretation of these passages. The Fathers of this council had cited the following text: Canticles II. 14. "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice." Gen. I. 26. "God made man in his own image and likeness." Gen. XXIII. 12. "And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land." Ex. XVIII. 7. "Moses made obeisance to his father-in-law." Luke VIII. 16. "No man lighteth a candle to put it under a bushel." Pope Adrian sustains the Fathers, saying, "They have correctly advanced these proofs, excellently have they shown to those who despise images, that doing so is putting the Lamp under a bushel." Where is the man with any fragment of independence or common sense, who would not detest so gross a profanation of the Scriptures; and yet these are the interpretations of the Church of Rome; the council speaks, and the Pope defends the council.

IS THE CHURCH INCAPABLE OF ERRING? HAS THE CHURCH OF ROME NEVER ERRED?

All these abuses are the result of the supposition that the Church cannot err. That the Church assembled to decide matters of faith cannot err. A proposition which, when closely examined, is proved presumptuous, contrary to reason, and contradicted by experience.

If by the Church our adversaries understand the assembly of God's true children, whom St. Paul designates in Heb. XII. 23. "The Church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven," it is absurd to query whether this Church can or can-

not err, as it never was assembled to judge of differences in religion, or to decide upon matters of faith.

Again, if by the Church is understood the universal visible Church, composed of all who profess the Christian faith, it is not less absurd to ask if this Church, assembled to decide matters of faith, is incapable of erring; for it is impossible that it should assemble for such purpose, being as it is, made up of discordant elements, viz. the Greek, the Roman, the Syrian, and other Churches, separated in their communion. How could they assemble? if assembled, who would harmonize them? who would arbitrate upon their differences, or preside over them? do they not all claim the characteristics ascribed by God to the true Church?

And if by the Church, is meant a particular Church, as that of Rome, or Antioch, or Constantinople, then our adversaries admit that these separate Churches may err; they grant that the Church at Jerusalem and that at Antioch, founded by St. Peter, have erred.

Sacred history testifies that the Jewish Church, which under the Old Testament was the only Church, has often erred. In Egypt it was idolatrous. Eze. XX. 7. 8. In the desert it was idolatrous, and worshipped a golden calf, to whom Aaron, the high priest erected an altar, Exod. XXXII. Uriah the high priest, built an idolatrous altar in the temple of God, 2nd Kings XVI. Jeremiah reproaches Judah with having as many Gods as cities; that the Kings, Priests and Prophets, had said to the wood, "Thou art my father," the very language of idolatry. He reiterates the same complaints in the 5th ch. v. 31. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so."

If then the only Church in existence at this time, and the pastors who had no rivals fell into error, is it likely that when the Church is divided into separate and opposite communions, one particular Church can with any degree of propriety arrogate to itself infallibility, and seek to subject all the rest to its will? and that without producing its credentials; but in contradiction of the experience of centuries, and against the judgment of all antiquity?

Did not the Greek and Roman Churches, joined together at the second Nicene council, fall into grievous error, when they determined under pain of anathema, that images were to be worshipped, being of equal value with the Gospel; nullifying at the same time the decrees of the council of Constantinople, composed of 338 Bishops, which but 23 years before, had formally condemned such worship as idolatrous?

Did not the Church of Rome err in the council of Neocésarée in the year 315, when it condemned second marriages, which are clearly permitted by the word of God?

Or at the council of Arles, in 452, when in opposition to the decree of the council of Gangres, in 340, which Leo IV had confirmed, it forbade a married man to be ordained priest, in direct contradiction of the word of God, by which it is allowed, 1 Tim. III. 2. Heb. XIII. 4; as also against the example of the Apostles, and specially of Peter, who had a wife. 1 Cor. IX. 5.

Or at the council of Lateran, under Innocent III. when power was given to the Pope to dispossess Princes of their Kingdoms, and to all catholics to combine for the massacre of heretics? and when a crusade was decided for the murder of the Albigenses, and the day fixed for the execution of this sanguinary decree?

Or at the Roman council under Gregory VII, where it was definitively established, that there is no other name under heaven, by which men can be saved, but the Pope's, and that no book is to be regarded as Canonical, but by his authority; besides, a declaration, that Kings were bound to kiss his (the Pope's) feet? *Baron Annal* 1076.

Or at the council of Constance, in 1414, when it was decided that no faith is to be kept with heretics but that they were to be burned, notwithstanding the promise that no harm should befal them? And that saying the Sacrament ought to be administered in both kinds, according to the example of our Lord and the primitive Church, is a daring heresy, punishable by the secular power?

Or at the last council of Lateran, when the Sacred Scriptures were placed at the Pope's feet, and the Pope declared a King very much resembling God; that all people should worship him; that he has all power in heaven and on earth; that he is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; the root of David; the redeemer of Sion, the divine Majesty?

Or at the council of Basle, in 1431, when it was ordered that the Lord's supper should be administered under both kinds, against the council of Constance, which, in 1414, had in contempt of God's word, Matt. XXVI. 27; Mark XIV. 23, decreed otherwise. Both these councils, however, agreed that a council was above the Pope, in opposition to a decree of one of the Lateran councils to the contrary.

In all this, what becomes of Christ? of the Holy Spirit speaking by the Scriptures? where the unity of faith? where infallibility?

Finally, has not Rome erred in the persons of its Popes?

Gregory I, Bishop of Rome, 604, declares "that he who seeks to be called universal Pontiff, becomes by his pride the precursor of Antichrist; and that no christian could bear this blasphemous designation. Greg. 1. Epist. lib. VI, 30. Ego fidenter dico, &c. But Gregory VII, 1070, said that the Roman Pontiff alone may justly be styled *Universal.* What infallibility! What permanence of truth! Greg. VII. Diet. Epist. Lib. II, 55. Reg. epist. lib. V, Ind. 13. epist. 20.

Leo IX (1049), and after him the same Gregory VII, procure and publish decrees of Councils, to the effect that the Pope can be judged of no man; that he is infallible; that the Church of Rome has never erred. Bel. IV. 8. Tertul. 502. Du Pin, 346. But Gregory XI, 1370, says on his death bed and declares in his will, "*that if in the consistory, in the Councils, or elsewhere, he has maintained doctrines opposed to the Catholic faith, he revokes what he has done.*" Spicil. Dach. tome 6. Basnage, tome 2, page 1598. May we not say with the Roman Doctor Almain, (1500) "that the Pope may err, not only as man, but also as judge." And if so, who is infallible?

Let us hear the answer:—Not in me, says Pope Victor, (202) for I was once a montanist and retracted.

Not in me, says Pope Stephen, (250), for I have entertained opinions styled heretical and blasphemous by Cyprian, concerning baptism.

Not in us, add the Popes, Liberius, (366) Zozimus, (418), and Honorius, (638) for we maintained the errors of Eutychus, Arius and Pelagius. Much less in us, say the Popes Vigil (550) and John XXII, (1330), for we have both retracted the errors of Eutychus specially; I, Vigil two separate times; and I, John, once on the question relating to the souls waiting for the resurrection. Labbé VI. 130. 197. 199. 310. God. IV. 265. 266, (id).

But the whole Church is at variance upon the subject. Three centuries after granting the infallibility to the Popes, it was wrested from them. A schism rent the Church. Two or three Popes ruled at the same time; one at Avignon, the others at Rome or elsewhere. A council undertook to demolish their infallibility, and decided that the Popes were subject to its authority. This council was held at Pisa, in the year 1510.

The Popish infallibility was thus destroyed; it was, however, needful to restore it. One of the councils of Lateran undertook the task, and declared Leo X. *to be a God, having all power in heaven and in earth;* and the question thus settled, the infallibility of Christ was conveyed to a poor weak mortal, a child of wrath even as others.

Next came the council of Trent, at which an ambassador from France declared that "his master would not allow the Pope to be above the council." Mark, reader! *His master!*—Not the Law of God, nor the Holy Spirit, of course; for what part could they have in such broils? The council remained undecided. On one hand it feared the French MASTER, and on the other, *it was acting under the authority of its Sovereign, the Pope.* Palav. lib. XI., c. 15. The matter remained unsettled, and so remains to this day. Further, if we glance at the moral conduct of those who have arrogated to themselves titles of infallible, conductors of the Church, and absolute judges of the sense of Scripture, what will be our astonishment when we hear in the council of Lateran (1512), a Vicar General of the Augustines, pronouncing a long discourse upon the wretched condition of Christendom, of which this is a fragment: "Can we "behold without weeping tears of blood, the disorder and cor- "ruption of this perverse and corrupt generation, the monstrous "depravity of morals, the ignorance, ambition, whoredom and "impiety which triumph even in the Sanctuary, from which "these shameful vices should be for ever excluded?" &c. Labb. Collec. Corc. gen. tome XIV. p. 4.

Here then, reader, you have some idea, though feeble, of the times in which we are told that religion flourished. And this is the infallibility which we are to submit to as the rule of our faith!

OF TRADITION.

The term, tradition, has several meanings. Sometimes it is taken in the general, for a doctrine which is communicated, whether by the organ of speech or in writing. In this sense, the Scripture may safely be designated a tradition. Hence St. Paul calls the doctrine of the Lord's supper a tradition, which he had taught the Corinthians by word of mouth first, and subsequently in writing, thus: 1 Cor. XI. 23. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," &c.

The word tradition is also used to designate doctrines not recorded. In this sense it is used by our Lord, when he says: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" In this latter sense we intend to treat the subject; and when we speak of an unwritten tradition, we desire to be understood to mean that it is not written in the sacred books; as of course it may be found in others.

Our adversaries produce the 15th verse of 2nd Thess. 2nd ch. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which "ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." From this passage, they infer a command to retain unwritten tradition. It must, however, be conceded, that such an inference agrees but badly with what the same Apostle writes, 1 Cor. IV. 6. that we are not to assume more than is written. The meaning, therefore, which they seek to give this text, cannot be admitted. It would be in manifest violation of common sense, to suppose, that the whole doctrine of Redemption was contained in the 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians, if he had withheld important truths contained in other Epistles and Scriptures. The question at issue, is not whether all that is necessary to salvation is contained in one short epistle or not, but are these necessary revelations contained in the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments? But, again, if St. Paul had said, hold fast the traditions which ye have received, whether by our ministry or through the Sacred Scriptures, it does not follow that what he had said must necessarily have been at variance with what was written. It is quite easy to teach the same doctrine by different means. And as we have proved that the Scriptures contain all the doctrines necessary to salvation, it must be admitted, that there exists no necessity to have recourse to unwritten traditions.

Our arguments cannot at all be confuted, unless it is averred that many things necessary to salvation are not found either in the Scriptures of the Old or New Testaments. This can never be proved; and when the Sacred Oracles are examined, with care, it may be found that many things are contained therein which were not supposed to be there—or that what we seek for, is not necessary to salvation—or, possibly, contrary to revealed truth.

It is objected, that we receive many things not contained in the Scriptures, such as the observation of Sundays, the festivals of Christmas, &c., the unity of God, the baptism of infants, &c.

We answer, that the authority for the observance of Sunday, is found in Acts XX. 7. 1st Cor. XVI. 2. &c. As to the holy days, they are not essential to salvation, and cannot be said to involve any doctrine. Col. II. 16.

The unity and trinity of the Godhead, are clearly established in 1st John V. 7. "For there are three that bear record in hea- "ven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three "are one." Here we have three persons in one Divine essence. This passage is surely plain enough.

As to the baptism of infants, I shall not take the trouble to prove it from Scripture, inasmuch, as the celebrated Cardinal Bellarmine, the Doctors of Louvain, and many other Catholics, have done so *from the Scriptures.*

If it could be proved, that God intended there should be mysteries in Religion, confided to its Ministers alone, then it might be necessary to have recourse to tradition: but there are no such mysteries. Moses never concealed the things he received from God; it is expressly stated, Exod. XXIV. 3. that "Moses came, and told the people all the words of the Lord, "and all the judgments." And our Lord enjoins his disciples "that what he had told them in darkness, they should proclaim in "the light, and what he had told them in the ear, they should "preach on the house top." Matt. X. 27.

Further, God condemns the traditions in various parts of the Scriptures, thus in Isaiah XXIX. 13. "Forasmuch as this "people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do "honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their "fear toward me is taught by the *precept of men.*" And at the 15th verse. "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their "counsel from the Lord," &c. Matt. XV. 8. 9. "But in vain "do they worship me, teaching for doctrine, the commandments "of men."

Here be it observed, our Saviour not only condemns the doctrines contrary to Scripture, but likewise those not contained therein, (notwithstanding the pretence that they had been received from Moses and the Prophets,) to which importance was sought to be attached, as binding the consciences of men, such as the washing of hands before eating, &c: Paul also in Col. II. 16 to 23, repudiates certain traditions, notwithstanding their apparent propriety.

In order that tradition should command our faith, it would be indispensable to prove, that it proceeded either from Christ or from his Apostles: but this is incapable of proof. Shortly after the death of the first disciples, it became a question, whether Easter should be celebrated on the 14th day of the moon, or the Sunday next ensuing. The Asiatic Churches maintained the 14th day; Polycrates and Polycarp said they had learnt this from St. John. The other Churches held the other side and professed to have derived their knowledge from the Apostles. What was to be done? If it was impossible, so soon after the death of the Apostles, to ascertain what their practice had been, what difficulties may not such subjects be supposed now to present, after the lapse of so many centuries? And what can tradi-

tion be after 1800 years have passed, but a subject of uncertainty and confusion, having, as it has, come through an almost infinite variety of men, naturally changing and unsettled? And so it is, for on this very subject there have ever existed differences between the Greek and Latin Churches. Add to this, that many of the traditions which have been taught, have been found mere fables, as may be gathered from the third book of the history of Eusebius. If to ascertain the doctrines necessary to salvation, it were necessary to have recourse to tradition, the Christian would be in an unfortunate predicament, inasmuch as there are no Apostles living, by whose authority genuine tradition could be distinguished from imposition.

Let me now observe, that in the first ages of the world, God instructed men by special revelations, and that this intercourse between him and his creatures, lasted while there was no written word. That the truths thus revealed, were embodied by Moses in Genesis. That when men multiplied, God directed his word to be written, in order that his instructions might not be corrupted by their wickedness, or lost through their negligence; a loss which has ever been sustained, where oral tradition has supplied the place of the written word. See before the deluge the corruption which reigned universally. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination "of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it "repented the Lord that he had made man." &c.

After the deluge, when the will of God was traditionally preserved. 1. Terah, Abraham's father, was an idolater. 2. Laban, Jacob's father-in-law, had his images, which he worshipped, and he swore by the Gods of his fathers. 3. In Jacob's own household there were strange gods; so he commands them, Gen. XXXV. 2.—Put away the strange gods that are among you, &c. 4. Jacob's family was again idolatrous in Egypt, and after their deliverance are commanded to remove the strange gods from among them, which their fathers worshipped on the other side the flood and in Egypt. Then in the desert they made a golden calf and worshipped it, and carried also the tabernacle of the God Rempham.

Among other nations, where traditions were preserved by priests, we discover the most abominable idolatries, with disgusting and corrupt superstition. The descendants of Esau, Isaac's son, and of Ammon and Moab, sons of Lot, who originally the true knowledge of God, finished by becoming as thoro -y wicked and idolatrous as the other heathen nations. The Israelites, themselves, and their Priests, frequently forsook the

way of truth, and obliged God to send them Prophets, and to chastise them, that they might be compelled to remember and observe the Law he had given them by his servant Moses.

All the ruins which have been discovered, attest that the ancient nations, which had only a traditionary knowledge of God, all fell into idolatry, and that frequently connected with obscene and bloody rites; calculated at all times, however, to increase the revenues of the Priesthood.

Since the advent of Christ, the nations which have persevered in regarding their traditions, have remained idolatrous, to wit, the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Islanders of the Pacific, &c. &c. Others early forsook their traditions, and embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He alone is the "true light, which enlighteneth "the world," and He alone gives to those that "believe, power "to become the sons of God, even to those that believe in his "name," while in Him they seek for wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification: for of God he is made to them "wisdom, right "eousness, sanctification and redemption."

Little by little, the imaginary traditions of Rome were established, and the Priesthood obstinately determined to adhere to them, have led the people into idolatry and superstition. They cause on Good Friday the cross to be kissed and worshipped; they also procure the adoration of a piece of bread, said to be God himself. And on the day of his accession to the papal chair, the Pope is placed on the altar, instead of the Holy Sacrament, (which as just said above, is regarded as God,) and the Cardinals and people pay him a similar homage.

These facts abundantly prove, that men have always corrupted oral tradition, and that tradition alone has ever led men into superstition and sin. It is, then, alone to the written word of God, the perfect rule of faith and morals, that such as desire to serve God and do his will must look; lest at the last day, this dreadful sentence should be uttered against them: "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." By the word, we may enter the narrow way which leads to life. Luke XIII. 24 to 23.

CLEARNESS OF THE SCRIPTURES.

We have proved that the Holy Scriptures contain all that is necessary to salvation, that they furnish the only rule of faith, that neither private interpretation, Romish interpretation, nor Romish unwritten tradition, can provide such a rule. It remains

for us briefly to show, that the doctrines necessary to salvation are *clearly* revealed.

To this end, let us mark what the Scripture saith; we all admit its divine inspiration, and may not question its testimony.

It is written: 2nd Cor. IV. 3. 4. "But if our Gospel be hid, "it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light "of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, "should shine unto them." Deut. XXX. 11. "For this com- "mandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from "thee, neither is it far off: it is not in heaven that thou should- "est say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto "us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh "unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do "it." Isaiah XLV. 19. "I have not spoken in secret, in "a dark place of the earth."

It is very clear, from these declarations of God, that his word is so well adapted to the intellectual capacities of men as to be able to bring them into the way of life and to save them from the way of death, and which their wickedness alone can prevent their deriving practical advantage from it. The Royal Prophet, concerning the word then known to the Church, speaks in this wise: Ps. CXIX. 105. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, "and a light unto my path." Ps. XIX. 7, 8.—"The law of the "Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord "is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are "right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is "pure, enlightening the eyes."

If the language of Scripture were dark, in vain would it have been given to us: but it was given for our instruction in faith and practice. Who will undertake to misunderstand St. Paul, Rom. XV. 4. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were "written for our learning; that we, through patience and com- "fort of the Scriptures might have hope." And St. John XX. 31 testifies that "these are written, that ye might believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might "have life through his name."

CONCLUSION.

From all that has been said, it results that there are in this world two religions: the one places the word of God over every

thing human: the other puts some things above the word of God. The first was evidently taught by our Saviour; the last by the rationalists of all creeds and denominations.

The motto of the first is: "All Scripture is inspired," its every iota is authoritative; it is the word of the Almighty and can never fail.

The motto of the latter is: "The word of God must be subject to human interpretation."

Instead of claiming the first place for the word of God, it is made to yield to reason, to tradition, or to some new light, by which it is to be explained. Hence rationalism and false creeds. The word of God is either corrected or completed, contradicted or interdicted, irreverently read, or its perusal prohibited.

The rationalism of Rome makes Scripture yield, not perhaps to the reason of living men, but to that of the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, which is called TRADITION. But when this is at fault, it is subjected to an Italian Priest, whom they dignify with the name of Pope, whose decision in matters of faith is declared infallible. Does the word of God require the worship of the Virgin Mary, or that of Angels? Does it exact remuneration for the pardon of sin? does it teach the worship of images and saints, or confession in the ear of a Priest? does it forbid the marriage of the clergy, or the use of meats? does it enjoin prayer in an unknown tongue? the appointment of a sovereign Pontiff; or the denial of the Scriptures to the people?

And when it speaks of Rome in the future, does it not point it out as the centre of an immense apostacy; as a Babylon, drunken with the blood of the Saints and the witnesses of Jesus?

Disciples of Christ, hear him in his word; there he will speak to you; be this the highest exercise of our reason, our greatest wisdom, the sure word of testimony, the lamp of our feet, the light of our path. "Sanctify us through thy truth; thy word "is truth."

NOTE.—The translation of this pamphlet has been accomplished amid pressing business engagements, and at so many different sittings, that it is feared the reader will find it but badly connected. The French original, though an extremely meritorious compilation, as far as the matter and scope are concerned, is somewhat rough and angular in its phraseology—defects which will probably appear to have been more closely imitated than the spirit or pathos of some very beautiful passages which it contains. Should this little work be deemed worthy of extended circulation, the translator will feel obliged by any small contribution for that object,—he has become responsible for the cost of the edition, and any mite deposited with the Printer, (Wm. Neilson, Mountain Street,) will be thankfully received and credited in liquidation.

P. L. S.

Montreal, 2nd March, 1844.